

THIS WEEK IN TEXAS HISTORY

February 2013 – Week 1

Air Date: February 3 – February 9 (Sunday – Saturday)



TITLE: THE GATES OF HEAVEN

FEBRUARY 1926 AND AN UNUSUAL TEXAN LEAVES A STELLAR LEGACY.

THIS WEEK IN TEXAS HISTORY, BROUGHT TO YOU BY THIS STATION AND THE SAVE TEXAS HISTORY PROGRAM OF THE GENERAL LAND OFFICE.

FEBRUARY 8, 1926. PARIS. MILLIONAIRE BANKER WILLIAM J. MCDONALD IS DEAD. A CONFEDERATE VETERAN, MCDONALD WAS FRUGAL AND ECCENTRIC. LIVING ALONE, HE DISLIKED CARS AND ELECTRIC LIGHTS.

YET UPON HIS DEATH HE LEFT HIS ENTIRE FORTUNE – \$1.4 MILLION – TO THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS TO BUILD AN ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATORY.

SOME SAY HE SPOKE OF TELESCOPES SEEING INTO THE GATES OF HEAVEN.

HIS FAMILY CALLED HIM CRAZY AND FOUGHT THE WILL. AFTER A HEATED TRIAL, ABOUT \$800,000 WENT TO UT.

THE MCDONALD OBSERVATORY WAS DEDICATED IN 1939 AND REMAINS A WORLD CLASS RESEARCH FACILITY.

WILLIAM J. MCDONALD DIED 87 YEARS AGO, THIS WEEK IN TEXAS HISTORY.

LEARN MORE AT SAVETEXASHISTORY.ORG OR CALL 800-998-4GLO.

P. M. Batchelder, "MCDONALD, WILLIAM JOHNSON," *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://0-www.tshaonline.org.sapl.sat.lib.tx.us/handbook/online/articles/fmc44>), accessed January 24, 2013. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

David S. Evans, "UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN MCDONALD OBSERVATORY," *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://0-www.tshaonline.org.sapl.sat.lib.tx.us/handbook/online/articles/kcu28>), accessed January 24, 2013. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE
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